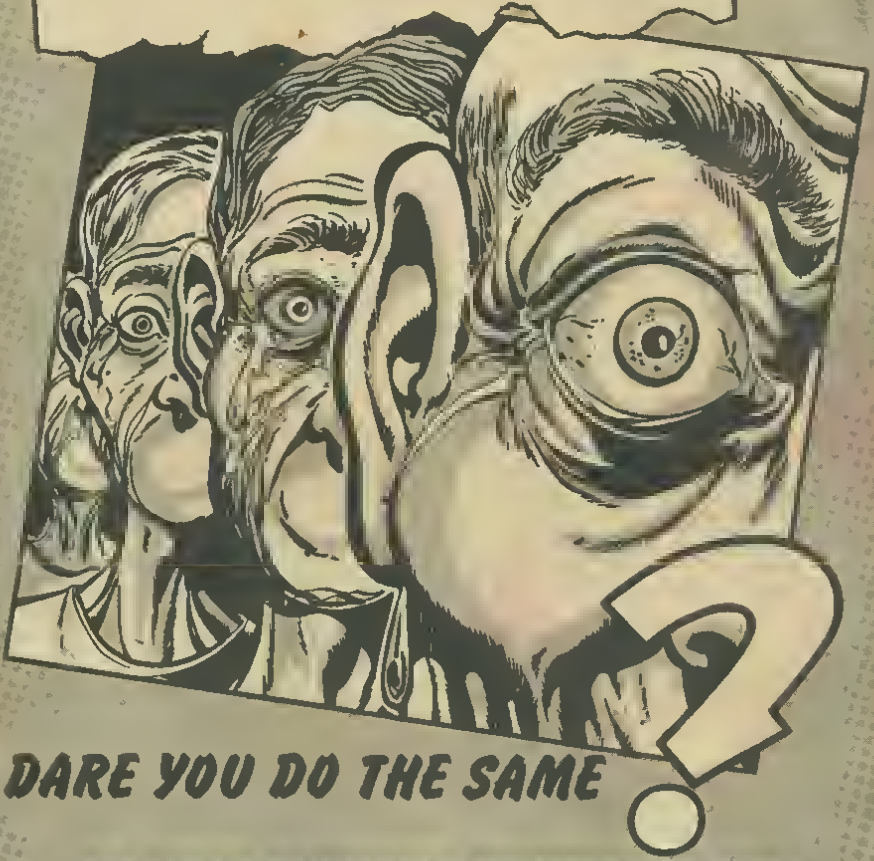
THIS MAGAZINE IS
HAUNTED
JUNE NO. 11
10¢
BEWARE! THIS IS DR. OEATH WARNING YOU—THE PAGES OF THIS MAGAZINE ARE LOAOEO WITH THE TOUCH OF DEATH!

THESE EYES HAVE SEEN BEHIND THE COVER OF...

BEWARE!

TERROR TALES

THE NEW COMIC MAGAZINE ADVENTURE THRILL OF THE CENTURY!



DARE YOU DO THE SAME

AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND 10¢

THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

Executive Editor
WILL LIEBERSON

Editor
V. A. PROVISIERO

LOVE IS THE MOST POWERFUL OF EMOTIONS---GREATER THAN ANGER, HATE, OR GREED. IT MAY BE BEAUTIFUL---BUT IT ALSO CAN BE **DEADLY!** RAYMOND LAWRENCE USED LOVE AS A WEAPON. HE WAS SELFISH, ARROGANT, SCHEMING... BUT HE PLAYED ON THE HEARTSTRINGS OF GULLIBLE WOMEN WITH THE MASTERY OF A TRUE CONNOISSEUR---UNTIL "SHE" CAME OUT OF THE ROTTED SWAMP AND MUCK TO TAKE HIM---OUT OF THE FETID SLIME OF LONG-DEAD PUTRESCENCE TO CLAIM HIM FOR HER OWN---YES---TO CALL HIM---

Lover

I'M HERE, MY DARLING! WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN ---ALWAYS AND FOREVER! I LOVE YOU---LOVE YOU--- LOVE YOU...

STOP IT!! D-DON'T TOUCH ME!! PLEASE!! Y-A-A-A-A-AH!

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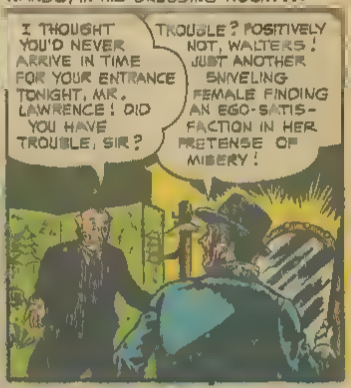
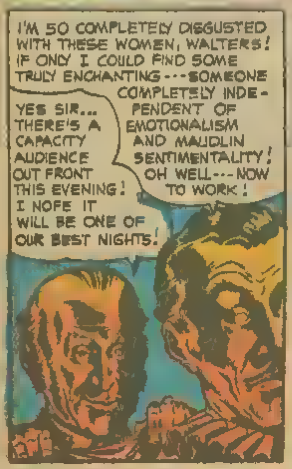
THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF BROADWAY NEVER BURNED BRIGHTER FOR RAYMOND LAWRENCE, THE ACTOR. SUAVE, HANDSOME, MANLY, HE WAS A PHENOMENAL SUCCESS IN EVERY DRAMATIC VEHICLE, CALLING FOR HIS TALENT. BUT HE WAS ALSO A NOTORIOUS HEART-BREAKER.

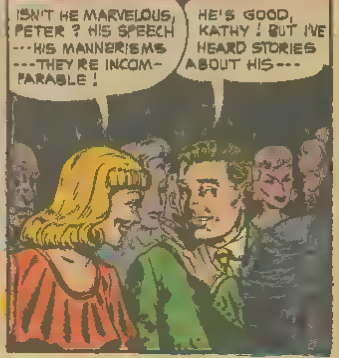
RAYMOND LAWRENCE THUS WALKED OUT ON ANOTHER AFFAIR THAT HAD ENDED SMOOTHLY---FOR HIM! AFTERWARDS, IN HIS DRESSING ROOM...



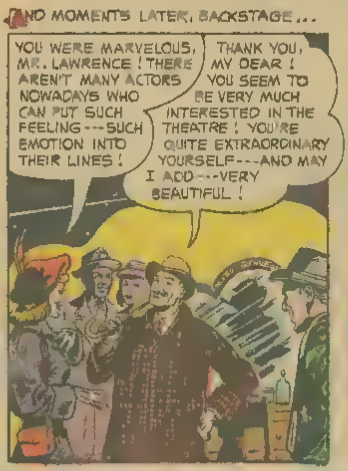


IT WAS---FOR LAWRENCE ALWAYS ACTED BEST AFTER HE WAS FINISHED WITH A ROMANCE! HIS FLAWLESS PERFORMANCE WAS TRULY SUPERB---AND THE APPLAUSE THAT GREETED HIM ALMOST DEAFENED HIS EARS!!

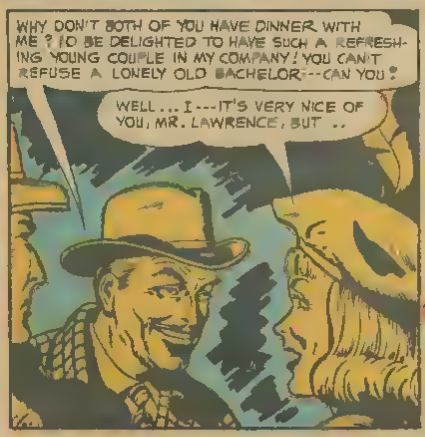
ON THE AUDIENCE, AMONG OTHERS, SAT A YOUNG COUPLE, ENTHRALLED BY THE MAGIC CHARM OF THE STAR. IT IS WITH THEM THAT OUR STORY REALLY BEGINS.

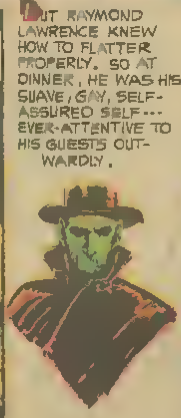


PETER! PLEASE!! OH, DO LET'S GO, BACKSTAGE! I WANT TO CONGRATULATE HIM! PLEASE!
ALL RIGHT--- BUT BE CAREFUL! I MEAN ---OHH---GO AHEAD! I GUESS I'M JUST A CAUTIOUS BOOB!


AND MOMENTS LATER, BACKSTAGE...
YOU WERE MARVELOUS, MR. LAWRENCE! THERE AREN'T MANY ACTORS NOWADAYS WHO CAN PUT SUCH FEELING---SUCH EMOTION INTO THEIR LINES!
THANK YOU, MY DEAR! YOU SEEM TO BE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN THE THEATRE! YOU'RE QUITE EXTRAORDINARY YOURSELF---AND MAY I ADD---VERY BEAUTIFUL!

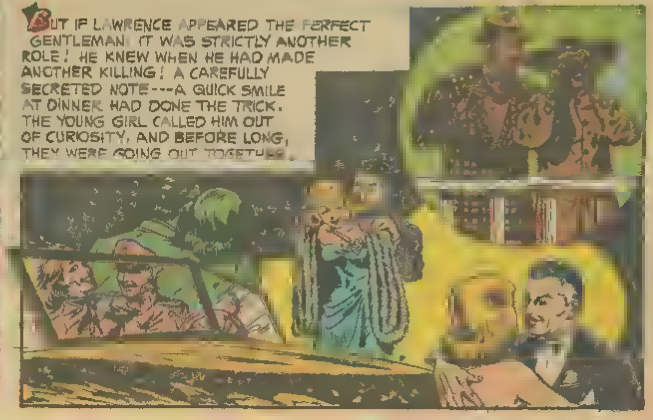
UH---THANK YOU! I---I'M AFRAID YOU'VE MADE ME BLUSH!
AND I'M AFRAID WE HAVE TO BE GOING! KATHY DOESN'T ALWAYS MAKE SUCH A FOOL OF HERSELF!
OH---PLEASE! THERE'S NO OFFENSE, I ASSURE YOU!

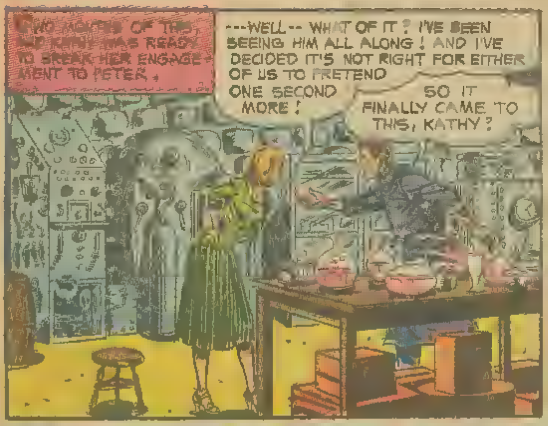

WHY DON'T BOTH OF YOU HAVE DINNER WITH ME? I'D BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE SUCH A REFRESHING YOUNG COUPLE IN MY COMPANY! YOU CAN'T REFUSE A LONELY OLD BACHELOR---CAN YOU?
WELL... I---IT'S VERY NICE OF YOU, MR. LAWRENCE, BUT ..

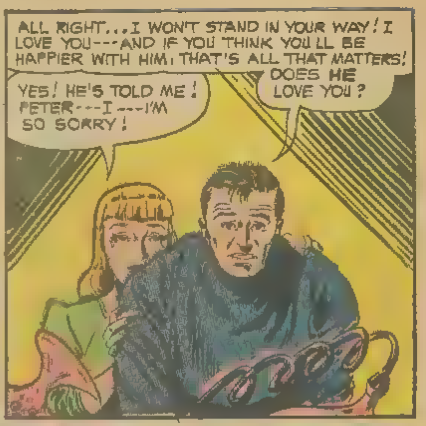

BUT RAYMOND LAWRENCE KNEW HOW TO FLATTER PROPERLY. SO AT DINNER, HE WAS HIS SUAVE, GAY, SELF-ASSURED SELF... EVER-ATTENTIVE TO HIS GUESTS OUTWARDLY.

---THAT'S WHY I'VE ALWAYS REMAINED SINGLE! HA, HA... NOW I'M AFRAID NO WOMAN WILL EVER FIND AN ATTRACTION TOWARDS ME AGAIN!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! I---I MEAN...I'M CERTAIN ANY GIRL WOULD FIND YOU--- HANDSOME!

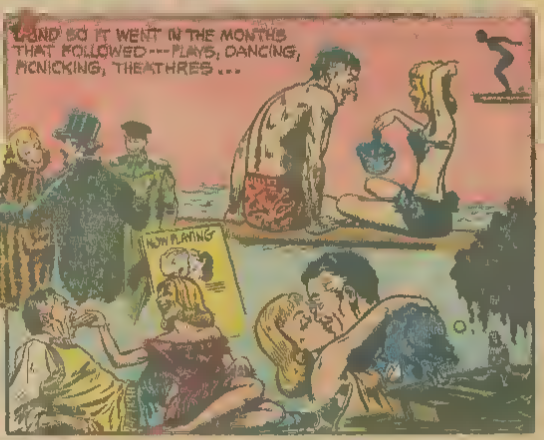
LATER...
UH-- WE HAVE TO BE GOING NOW MR. LAWRENCE!
OH YES! THANKS ONCE AGAIN FOR ACCOMPANYING ME AS MY GUESTS! DO VISIT ME AGAIN! SO GLAD TO HAVE MET BOTH OF YOU!
T THANK YOU ---AND GOODBYE!


BUT IF LAWRENCE APPEARED THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN! IT WAS STRICTLY ANOTHER ROLE! HE KNEW WHEN HE HAD MADE ANOTHER KILLING! A CAREFULLY SECRETED NOTE---A QUICK SMILE AT DINNER HAD DONE THE TRICK. THE YOUNG GIRL CALLED HIM OUT OF CURIOSITY, AND BEFORE LONG, THEY WERE GOING OUT TOGETHER.


TWO MONTHS OF THIS, AND KATHY WAS READY TO BREAK HER ENGAGEMENT TO PETER.
---WELL-- WHAT OF IT? I'VE BEEN SEEING HIM ALL ALONG! AND I'VE DECIDED IT'S NOT RIGHT FOR EITHER OF US TO PRETEND ONE SECOND MORE!
SO IT FINALLY CAME TO THIS, KATHY?

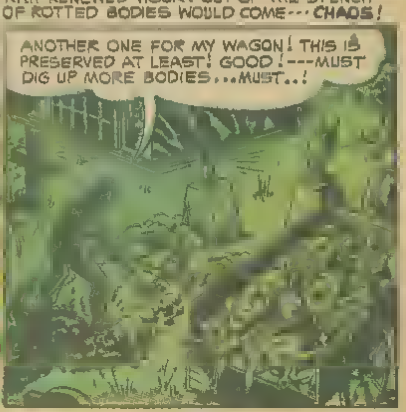

ALL RIGHT...I WON'T STAND IN YOUR WAY! I LOVE YOU---AND IF YOU THINK YOU'LL BE HAPPIER WITH HIM, THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!
DOES HE LOVE YOU?
YES! HE'S TOLD ME! PETER---I---I'M SO SORRY!

ORDINARILY, THIS WOULD BE THE END TO OUR STORY. IT'S USUAL ENOUGH---BOY LOSES GIRL, AND SO FORTH. BUT PETER WASN'T A USUAL GUY, AS WE WILL SEE. AT ANY RATE, RAYMOND LAWRENCE ROMANCED KATHY FOR ALL SHE WAS WORTH.
HAPPY, KATHY DEAR?
YES, DEAR! HOLD ME CLOSE---CLOSE!!


AND SO IT WENT IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED---PLAYS, DANCING, PICNICKING, THEATHRES...
NOW PLAYING

UNTIL ONE MORNING, NEWS---THAT HEADLINES SHOCKED A CERTAIN YOUNG MAN!
NO---OH NO!!!
TABLEAU
GIRL COMMITS SUICIDE
DESPONDENT OVER THE ENDING OF THEIR WHIRL-WIND ROMANCE, KATHY NEFF, AGED 22, LEFT A NOTE BEFORE SHE HURLED HERSELF FROM THE BRIDGE

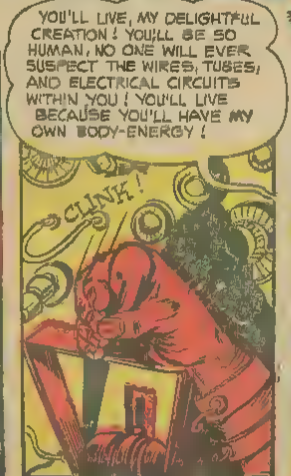
I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM PAY FOR THIS! I'LL DEVOTE MY ENTIRE LIFE TO IT! SHE WAS THE ONLY THING I EVER LOVED---THE ONLY ONE WHO MEANT EVERYTHING TO ME! I'LL MAKE HIM PAY!!

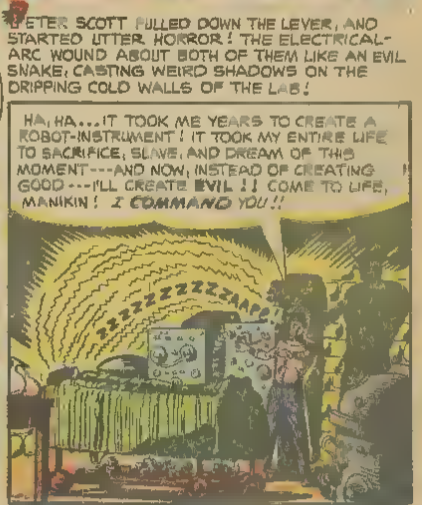

AND SO, AT A CEMETERY ONE DARK NIGHT, A MUFFLED FIGURE BENT TO HIS GRISLY TASK WITH RENEWED VIGOR. OUT OF THE STENCH OF ROTTED BODIES WOULD COME---CHAOS!
ANOTHER ONE FOR MY WAGON! THIS IS PRESERVED AT LEAST! GOOD!---MUST DIG UP MORE BODIES...MUST...!

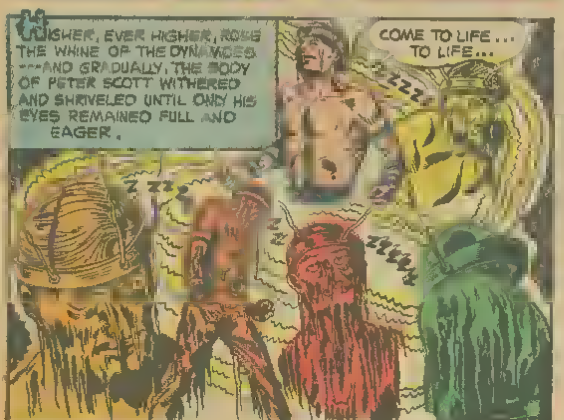
HOW SILENT THEY ARE! BUT SO ARE YOU, KATHY! ARE YOU LISTENING, WHEREVER YOU ARE? REJOICE, MY DARLING! YOU'LL SOON BE AT PEACE! HA, HA...
HERE LIES

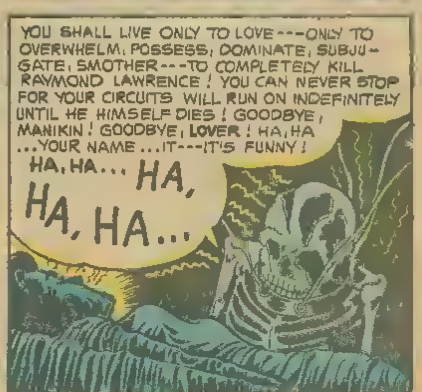
PETER SCOTT, YOU SEE, WAS AN INVENTOR---BUT NOW A CRAZED ONE! NIGHT FOLLOWED NIGHT, AND A SUCCESSION OF BODIES CONTINUED TO ENTER HIS FORBIDDING LABORATORY IN PUTRESCENT EVIL.
THIS TIME, I MUST SEW THIS ARM-SINEW CORRECTLY! THERE!

IN NO TIME AT ALL, YOU'LL BE WHAT MEN WOULD GIVE UP THEIR LIVES FOR! HOW BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE! HOW COMPLETELY VOLUPTUOUS AND SWEET---AND HOW HORRIBLE!!

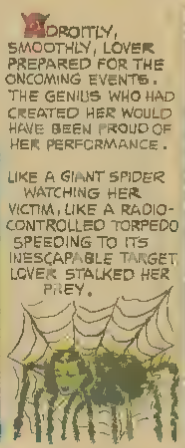

YOU'LL LIVE, MY DELIGHTFUL CREATION! YOU'LL BE SO HUMAN, NO ONE WILL EVER SUSPECT THE WIRES, TUBES, AND ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS WITHIN YOU! YOU'LL LIVE BECAUSE YOU'LL HAVE MY OWN BODY-ENERGY!
CLINK!


PETER SCOTT PULLED DOWN THE LEVER, AND STARTED UTTER HORROR! THE ELECTRICAL-ARC WOUND ABOUT BOTH OF THEM LIKE AN EVIL SNAKE; CASTING WEIRD SHADOWS ON THE DRIPPING COLD WALLS OF THE LAB!
HA, HA...IT TOOK ME YEARS TO CREATE A ROBOT-INSTRUMENT! IT TOOK MY ENTIRE LIFE TO SACRIFICE, SLAVE, AND DREAM OF THIS MOMENT---AND NOW, INSTEAD OF CREATING GOOD---I'LL CREATE EVIL!! COME TO LIFE, MANIKIN! I COMMAND YOU!!
ZZZZZZZZZZAAAP!

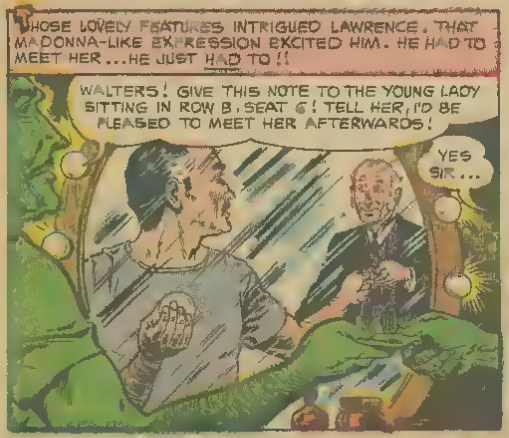

HIGHER, EVER HIGHER, ROSE THE WHINE OF THE DYNAMOES---AND GRADUALLY, THE BODY OF PETER SCOTT WITHERED AND SHRIVELED UNTIL ONLY HIS EYES REMAINED FULL AND EAGER.
COME TO LIFE... TO LIFE...
ZZZZ
Z ZZZ
ZZZZZ


YOU SHALL LIVE ONLY TO LOVE---ONLY TO OVERWHELM, POSSESS, DOMINATE, SUBJUGATE, SMOTHER---TO COMPLETELY KILL RAYMOND LAWRENCE! YOU CAN NEVER STOP FOR YOUR CIRCUITS WILL RUN ON INDEFINITELY UNTIL HE HIMSELF DIES! GOODBYE, MANIKIN! GOODBYE, LOVER! HA, HA ...YOUR NAME ...IT---IT'S FUNNY!
HA, HA... HA, HA, HA...

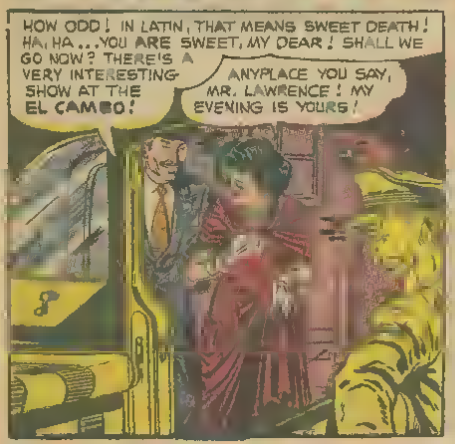
LAUGHING THUS, PETER GOTT DIED, DRAINED OF ALL LIFE-ENERGY. BUT IN ONE CORNER OF THE LAB, A PAIR OF EYES OPENED ---LOVELY AND TERRIBLE!
I LIVE...I BREATHE! I HEAR AND THINK! BUT I AM A MACHINE CREATED BY A DEAD MAN! YET MY PURPOSE FOR BEING IS CLEAR! RAYMOND LAWRENCE NEEDS ME! HE CANNOT DO WITHOUT ME ---I WILL GO TO HIM!

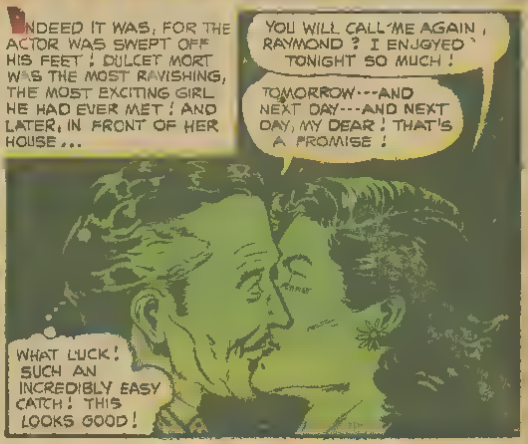

ADROITLY, SMOOTHLY, LOVER PREPARED FOR THE ONCOMING EVENTS. THE GENIUS WHO HAD CREATED HER WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF HER PERFORMANCE.
LIKE A GIANT SPIDER WATCHING HER VICTIM, LIKE A RADIO-CONTROLLED TORPEDO SPEEDING TO ITS INESCAPABLE TARGET LOVER STALKED HER PREY.

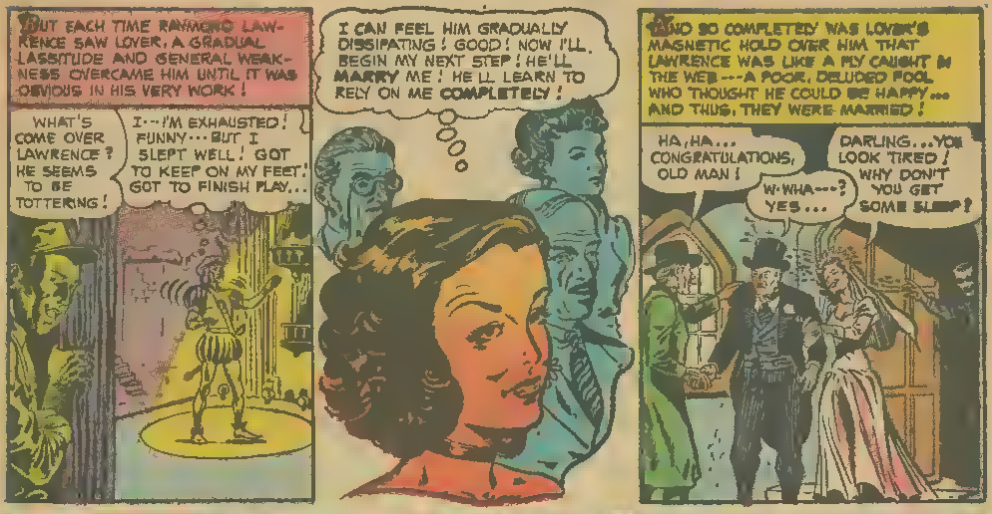
WHO IS THAT INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL GIRL DOWN THERE? SHE COMES HERE TO STARE AT ME NIGHT AFTER NIGHT!


THOSE LOVELY FEATURES INTRIGUED LAWRENCE. THAT MADONNA-LIKE EXPRESSION EXCITED HIM. HE HAD TO MEET HER...HE JUST HAD TO!!
WALTERS! GIVE THIS NOTE TO THE YOUNG LADY SITTING IN ROW B, SEAT 6! TELL HER, I'D BE PLEASED TO MEET HER AFTERWARDS!
YES SIR...

LATER, AFTER THE PERFORMANCE...
YOU CAME, AFTER ALL! I WAS AFRAID YOU WOULD BE OFFENDED...
WHY? YOU'RE THE GREATEST ACTOR WHO EVER LIVED! I'D GIVE UP ANYTHING JUST TO TALK TO YOU!! I WAS HOPING YOU'D NOTICE ME! MY NAME IS DULCET MORT!

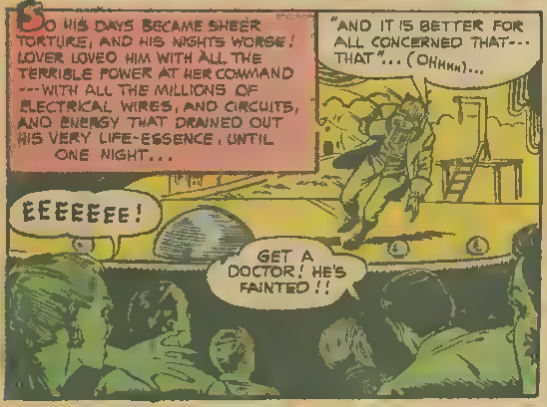

HOW ODD! IN LATIN, THAT MEANS SWEET DEATH! HA, HA...YOU ARE SWEET, MY DEAR! SHALL WE GO NOW? THERE'S A VERY INTERESTING SHOW AT THE EL CAMEO!
ANYPLACE YOU SAY, MR. LAWRENCE! MY EVENING IS YOURS!

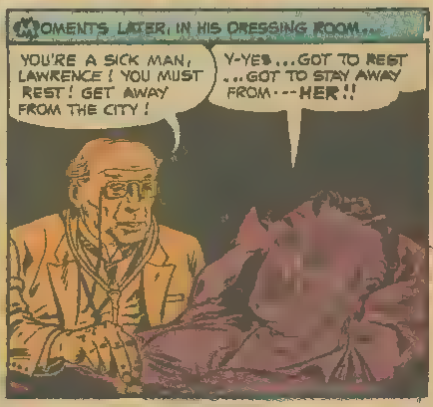

INDEED IT WAS, FOR THE ACTOR WAS SWEPT OFF HIS FEET; DULCET MORT WAS THE MOST RAVISHING, THE MOST EXCITING GIRL HE HAD EVER MET! AND LATER, IN FRONT OF HER HOUSE...
YOU WILL CALL ME AGAIN, RAYMOND? I ENJOYED TONIGHT SO MUCH!
TOMORROW---AND NEXT DAY---AND NEXT DAY, MY DEAR! THAT'S A PROMISE!
WHAT LUCK! SUCH AN INCREDIBLY EASY CATCH! THIS LOOKS GOOD!

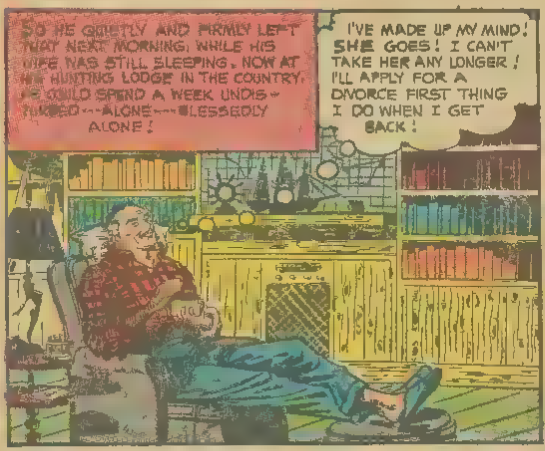

BUT EACH TIME RAYMOND LAWRENCE SAW LOVER, A GRADUAL LASSITUDE AND GENERAL WEAKNESS OVERCAME HIM UNTIL IT WAS OBVIOUS IN HIS VERY WORK!
WHAT'S COME OVER LAWRENCE? HE SEEMS TO BE TOTTERING!
I--I'M EXHAUSTED! FUNNY--- BUT I SLEPT WELL! GOT TO KEEP ON MY FEET! GOT TO FINISH PLAY...
I CAN FEEL HIM GRADUALLY DISSIPATING! GOOD! NOW I'LL BEGIN MY NEXT STEP! HE'LL MARRY ME! HE'LL LEARN TO RELY ON ME COMPLETELY!
AND SO COMPLETELY WAS LOVER'S MAGNETIC HOLD OVER HIM THAT LAWRENCE WAS LIKE A FLY CAUGHT IN THE WEB---A POOR, DELUDED FOOL WHO THOUGHT HE COULD BE HAPPY... AND THUS, THEY WERE MARRIED!
HA, HA... CONGRATULATIONS, OLD MAN!
W-WHA---? YES...
DARLING...YOU LOOK TIRED! WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME SLEEP?

DAYS PASSED--- WEEKS AND MONTHS ...LOVER TOOK OVER ALL OF RAYMOND LAWRENCE'S INTERESTS! NOTHING ESCAPED HER! SHE WAS HER ALL-ENVELOPING, LOVING, SELF--- SMOTHERING HIM WITH KINDNESS, WAITING ON HIM HAND-AND-FOOT, CONTROLLING HIS DECISIONS.
YOU CAN'T TAKE ON ANOTHER PLAY, DEAR! I KNOW BEST!!
ALL RIGHT! ANYTHING YOU SAY!

MORE AND MORE AND MORE...
---PLEASE GET RID OF HIM, DEAREST! HE MAY BE YOUR FRIEND, BUT HE'S NOT THE RIGHT TYPE FOR YOU! PLEASE!!
B-BUT, DULCET... I KNOW HIM FOR YEARS... I---YES...


SO HIS DAYS BECAME SHEER TORTURE, AND HIS NIGHTS WORSE! LOVER LOVED HIM WITH ALL THE TERRIBLE POWER AT HER COMMAND ---WITH ALL THE MILLIONS OF ELECTRICAL WIRES, AND CIRCUITS, AND ENERGY THAT DRAINED OUT HIS VERY LIFE-ESSENCE, UNTIL ONE NIGHT...
"AND IT IS BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED THAT--- THAT"... (OHHHH)...
EEEEEEE!
GET A DOCTOR! HE'S FAINTED!!


MOMENTS LATER, IN HIS DRESSING ROOM...
YOU'RE A SICK MAN, LAWRENCE! YOU MUST REST! GET AWAY FROM THE CITY!
Y-YES...GOT TO REST ...GOT TO STAY AWAY FROM---HER!!

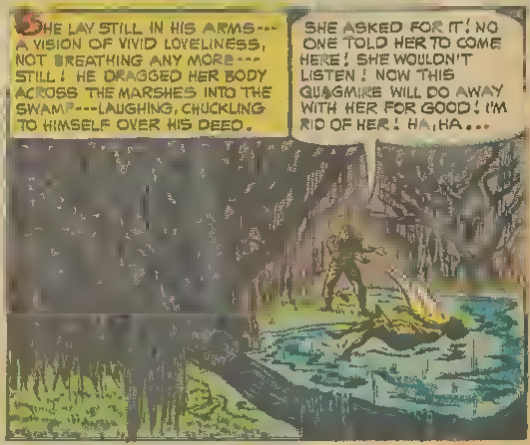

SO HE QUIETLY AND FIRMLY LEFT THAT NEXT MORNING, WHILE HIS WIFE WAS STILL SLEEPING. NOW AT HIS HUNTING LODGE IN THE COUNTRY, HE COULD SPEND A WEEK UNDISTURBED---ALONE---BLESSEDLY ALONE!
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! SHE GOES! I CAN'T TAKE HER ANY LONGER! I'LL APPLY FOR A DIVORCE FIRST THING I DO WHEN I GET BACK!

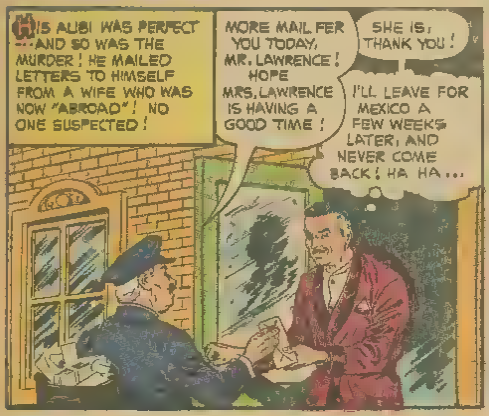
HELLO, RAYMOND!
YOU!

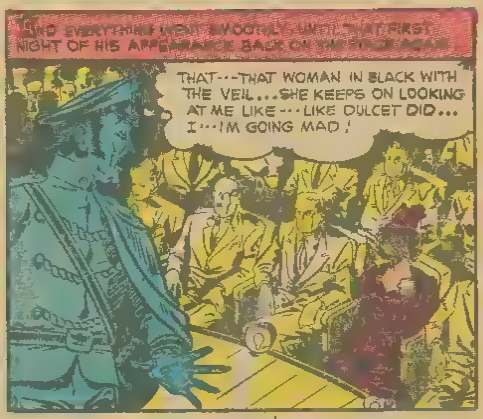
HOW DID YOU FIND OUT WHERE I WAS? WHO TOLD YOU? HOW DARE YOU COME HERE? PLEASE LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
BUT I'M YOUR WIFE, DEAREST! I LOVE YOU!! AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF LEAVING YOU!! IT WAS EASY TO HIRE A PRIVATE DETECTIVE TO TRACE YOU TO YOUR LODGE!

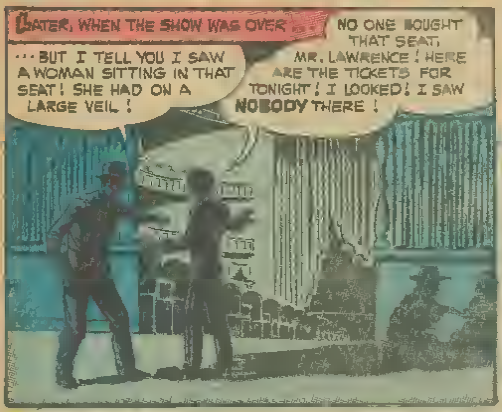
NOW PLEASE SAY THAT YOU FORGIVE ME! I'VE MISSED YOU, DARLING RAYMOND! DON'T YOU HAVE A SMALL KISS FOR ME?
NO! GET A-AWAY FROM ME! I--- I'M TIRED OF YOUR POSSESSIVENESS! I'M TIRED OF YOUR SMOTHERING COMPASSION---YOUR ---YOUR OVERWHELMING LOVE! GET AWAY I SAID!

ALL RIGHT! YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME! NOW DIE!! I---I'M GOING TO CHOKE THE LOVING LIFE OUT OF YOU!! I'M GOING TO RID MYSELF OF YOUR GHOULISH DEVOTION! DIE! DIE!
I LOVE YOU, RAYMOND--- LOVE YOU--- LOVE YOU...


SHE LAY STILL IN HIS ARMS--- A VISION OF VIVID LOVELINESS, NOT BREATHING ANY MORE--- STILL! HE DRAGGED HER BODY ACROSS THE MARSHES INTO THE SWAMP---LAUGHING, CHUCKLING TO HIMSELF OVER HIS DEED.
SHE ASKED FOR IT! NO ONE TOLD HER TO COME HERE! SHE WOULDN'T LISTEN! NOW THIS QUAGMIRE WILL DO AWAY WITH HER FOR GOOD! I'M RID OF HER! HA, HA...


HIS ALIBI WAS PERFECT ---AND SO WAS THE MURDER! HE MAILED LETTERS TO HIMSELF FROM A WIFE WHO WAS NOW "ABROAD"! NO ONE SUSPECTED!
MORE MAIL FER YOU TODAY, MR. LAWRENCE! HOPE MRS. LAWRENCE IS HAVING A GOOD TIME!
SHE IS; THANK YOU!
I'LL LEAVE FOR MEXICO A FEW WEEKS LATER, AND NEVER COME BACK! HA HA...


AND EVERYTHING WENT SMOOTHLY UNTIL THE FIRST NIGHT OF HIS APPEARANCE BACK ON THE STAGE AGAIN...
THAT---THAT WOMAN IN BLACK WITH THE VEIL...SHE KEEPS ON LOOKING AT ME LIKE---LIKE DULCET DID... I---I'M GOING MAD!


LATER, WHEN THE SHOW WAS OVER...
...BUT I TELL YOU I SAW A WOMAN SITTING IN THAT SEAT! SHE HAD ON A LARGE VEIL!
NO ONE BOUGHT THAT SEAT, MR. LAWRENCE! HERE ARE THE TICKETS FOR TONIGHT! I LOOKED! I SAW NOBODY THERE!

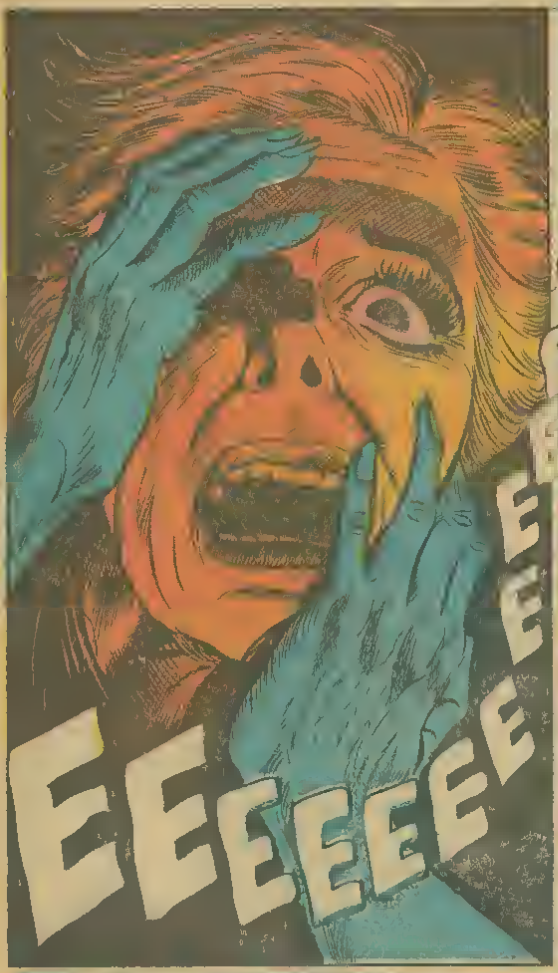
L-LET ME OUT OF HERE! IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MY IMAGINATION. I SAW HER! SHE'S COME BACK!
Y-A-A-A-A-A-A-H!

THIS WAS THE LAST NIGHT RAYMOND LAWRENCE WOULD EVER GIVE ANOTHER PERFORMANCE! TOMORROW, HE PROMISED HIMSELF, HE WOULD LEAVE THE CITY. AND SO HE WENT TO BED, SLEEPING FITFULLY UNTIL MIDNIGHT, WHEN...
RAYMOND! RAYMOND DEAR!
MMMMPFF! W-WHO...

YAAAAAH!
I'VE COME BACK FOR YOU, MY DEAREST! I LOVE YOU! I'LL NEVER LET YOU GO! AREN'T YOU GLAD TO SEE ME? TELL ME---AM I STILL---BEAUTIFUL?

IT---IT CAN'T BE! HELP! HELP!
HA,HA... HA,HA,HA...

HALF-HOUR LATER, HE HAD BLUBBERED EVERYTHING TO THE POLICE. NOW HE SAT ON THE BENCH, A FORLORN, FRANTIC FIGURE, ALONE IN HIS FRIGHT---NUMBED IN HIS TERROR.
WELL, WHAT DO WE DO WITH HIM? THE GUY'S A LOONY IF I EVER SAW ONE! NOTHING CHECKS! HIS STORY DOESN'T STAY TOGETHER!
HIS WIFE CALLED HEADQUARTERS LAST NIGHT! SHE SAYS HE LEFT HER STRANDED AT THEIR HUNTING-LODGE! BETTER CALL THE HOSPITAL INSTEAD!
THEY TOOK HIM TO AN OBSERVATION WARD. HOURS MELTED INTO DAYS---AND DAYS INTO WEEKS...ENDLESS QUESTIONING---ENDLESS TREATMENTS---AND ALWAYS THAT SAME TERRIBLE THOUGHT.
SHE'S ALIVE! I KILLED HER:--AND SHE'S STILL ALIVE!! Y-A-AAH!
YOU DIDN'T KILL HER! SHE LOVES YOU, LAWRENCE! ALL THAT HAS BEEN AN HALLUCINATION!
BECAUSE HE WAS FAMOUS---BECAUSE HE WAS RECOGNIZED, RAYMOND LAWRENCE WAS DISCHARGED QUIETLY---AND WITHOUT FUSS. BUT HE WAS ALSO RESTED, HIS WITS COLLECTED ---HIS USUAL CUNNING SELF.
GOODBYE, MR. LAWRENCE! I TRUST YOU WON'T HAVE ANY MORE DIFFICULTIES!
I WON'T COUNT ON IT, DOCTOR! GOODBYE!
YES, GOODBYE, YOU OLD FOOL! I KILLED HER--- AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A PRACTICAL JOKER CALLING THE POLICE! BUT I'M NOT GOING TO STOP TO FIND OUT! I'M LEAVING THE COUNTRY!
THE WEB WAS DRAWING TIGHTER. SOMEWHERE, SOMEONE WOULD CHECK HIS STORY. SOMEONE BY CURIOSITY WOULD REALLY TRY TO FIND HIS WIFE---AND THEN ALL WOULD COME OUT! SO IN HIS APARTMENT, MOMENTS LATER...
I'VE GOT ENOUGH MONEY NEVER TO COME BACK TO THIS ACCURSED PLACE. MY IMAGINATION REALLY WAS WORKING OVERTIME! HOW SILLY TO THINK DEAD CORPSES CAN RETURN! HA, HA...
W-WHAT WAS THAT? SOMEONE'S IN THIS HOUSE! SOMEONE'S OUT IN THAT HALLWAY---EVEN THOUGH I'VE LOCKED THE DOOR!!
CLICK
THEN HE SAW HER!!
HELLO, RAYMOND! IT'S YOUR OWN SWEET WIFE! I'VE RETURNED FOR YOU, DEAR! YOU SEE, IT WASN'T YOUR IMAGINATION! I LOVE YOU! AND THE SWAMP IS SO QUIET!
Y-YOUR BODY! TUBES, WIRES ---FLESH COMING OFF IN STRIPS---?!
DON'T MIND IT, DARLING! LOVE IS GREATER THAN MERE BEAUTY! AND IT'S YOU I LOVE! WE'LL GO BACK TO THE SWAMP TOGETHER---JUST YOU AND I! NOW KISS ME, SWEET! KISS ME! KISS ME! THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, ISN'T IT? LOVE-! LOVE! HA, HA...
YAAAAAAAAAAA
WHEN THEY FOUND RAYMOND'S BODY, FLOATING IN THE SWAMP, THE POLICE THOUGHT HE HAD GONE MAD AGAIN AND HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE/ BUT WE KNOW WHAT HAD REALLY HAPPENED, DON'T WE/


EEEEEEEE
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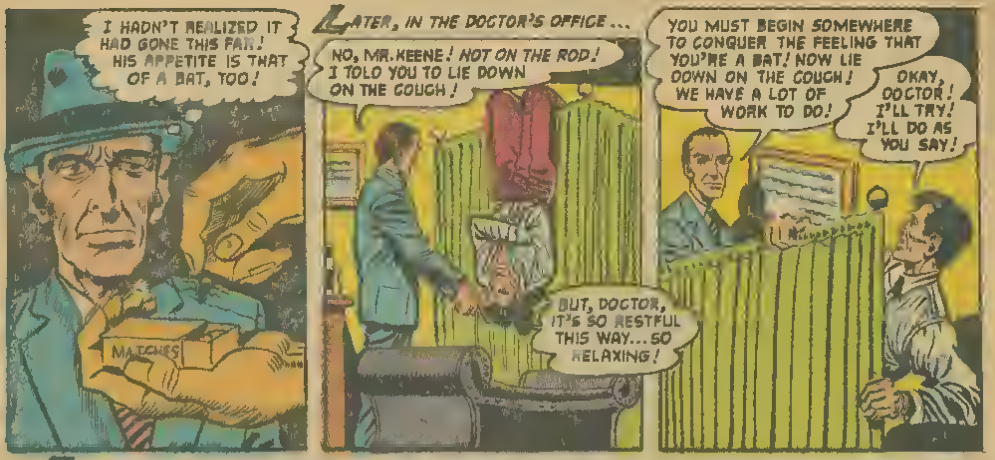
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT'S ALL THE SCREAMING ABOUT?
THAT'S ROOM 213! THAT'S THE ROOM HE TOLD ME TO COME TO WHEN HE CALLED MY OFFICE!
EEEEEEE!

I FEAR I AM TOO LATE!
213

AN AGONIZING SCREAM THAT TEARS THE NIGHT SILENCE LIKE A KNIFE WOUND! FOOTSTEPS RACING DOWN A HOTEL CORRIDOR! A TALL, PROFESSIONAL-LOOKING MAN OPENS THE DOOR OF ROOM 213....
AND THEN WHAT????

I AM DOCTOR SEB...OH, NO! GOOD HEAVENS!
YOU MUST BE DR. SEBASTIAN, THE PSYCHIATRIST! THANK GOODNESS YOU CAME! IT WAS I WHO CALLED YOU! KEENE--JOE KEENE!
NOW, CLIMB DOWN SO WE CAN TALK!
NO--! DON'T RAISE THE BLIND! I CAN'T STAND THE LIGHT!
DOCTOR, I HAVE THE FEELING I'M TURNING INTO A BAT! I'VE BEEN TO MANY, MANY DOCTORS, BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO HELP ME! I KEEP GETTING WORSE AND WORSE ALL THE TIME!
I'M AFRAID OF BRIGHT LIGHTS... LOUD NOISES... I CAN ONLY SLEEP UPSIDE DOWN IN A CLOSET --MY FEATURES ARE CHANGING ...AND EVEN MY TASTES IN FOOD ARE CHANGING!
I THINK I CAN HELP YOU; BUT I CAN'T WORK IN THIS ATMOSPHERE! MY CAR IS OUTSIDE! WE'LL GO TO MY OFFICE!
I'LL DO ANYTHING, DOCTOR! ANYTHING!

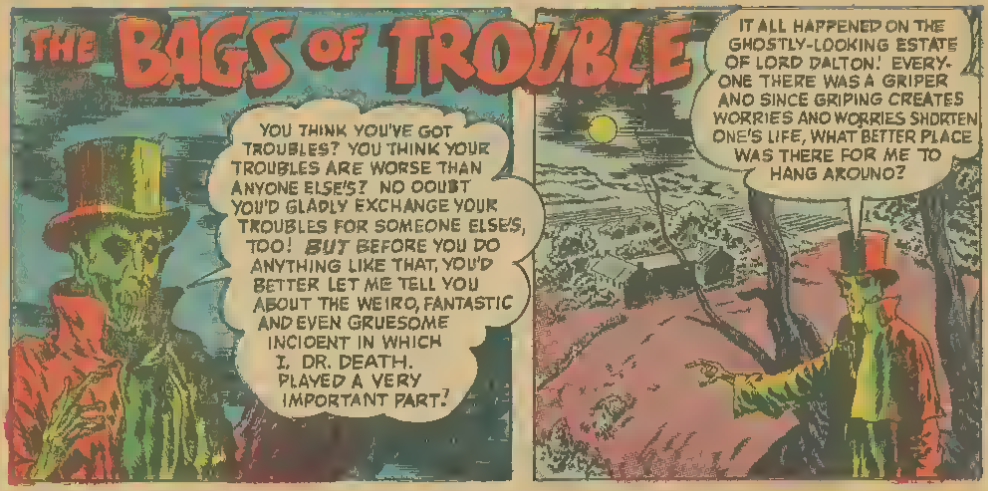
THE DOCTOR'S QUIET CONFIDENCE SEEMED TO CALM THE TORMENTED MAN, BUT ON THE JOURNEY TO DR. SEBASTIAN'S OFFICE, SUDDENLY KEENE'S FEATURES TWISTED HIDEOUSLY!
DOCTOR, I'M HUNGRY... TERRIBLY HUNGRY! LET ME OUT! I MUST EAT!
WE'RE ALMOST AT MY OFFICE NOW, MR. KEENE! YOU CAN HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT THERE!
NO! I CAN'T WAIT! I MUST EAT NOW!
KEENE, WAIT!
KEENE, COME BACK!
NO USE! HE'S GOING INTO THAT DILAPIDATED TENEMENT!
I'VE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE IN THE BUILDING, BUT NO SIGN OF HIM. HE MUST BE IN THE BASEMENT. WAIT---I SEE HIM! BUT WHAT'S HE DOING IN THAT CORNER?
AHHH! A FAT, JUICY SPIDER! THAT'S THE ONE I WANT... UMMM....


I HADN'T REALIZED IT HAD GONE THIS FAR! HIS APPETITE IS THAT OF A BAT, TOO!
MATCHES
LATER, IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE ...
NO, MR. KEENE! NOT ON THE ROD! I TOLD YOU TO LIE DOWN ON THE COUCH!
BUT, DOCTOR, IT'S SO RESTFUL THIS WAY... SO RELAXING!
YOU MUST BEGIN SOMEWHERE TO CONQUER THE FEELING THAT YOU'RE A BAT! NOW LIE DOWN ON THE COUCH! WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO!
OKAY, DOCTOR! I'LL TRY! I'LL DO AS YOU SAY!

FOR MANY DAYS, DR. SEBASTIAN WORKED ON KEENE, WATCHED HIM CLOSELY, NOTING THE CHANGES TAKING PLACE!
THEN...
YOU'RE READY, KEENE! FACE THE WINDOW! I'M GOING TO DRAW THE BLIND!

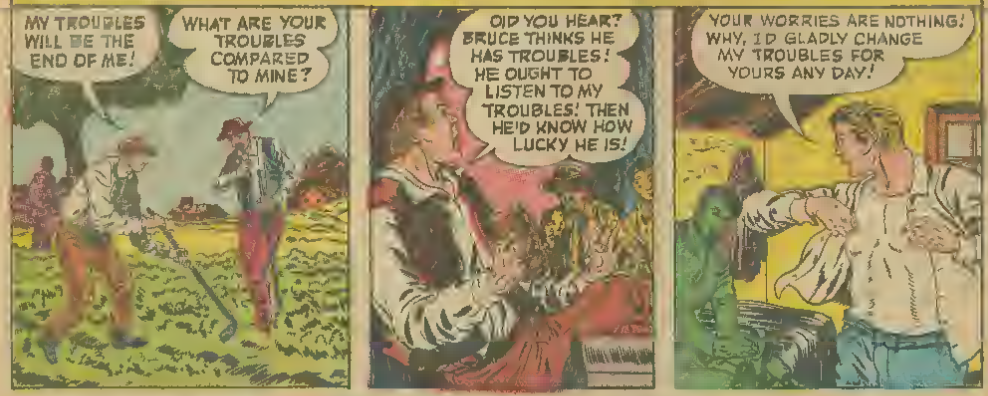
SEE, YOU CAN FACE LIGHT! THE BAT-LOOK IS GONE! YOU'VE SHAVED, CLIPPED YOUR FINGER-NAILS AND NOW YOU'RE A NEW MAN! YOUR SPLIT PERSONALITY IS GONE AND YOU'LL HAVE NO MORE DELUSIONS THAT YOU'RE A BAT!
DOCTOR, I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH YOU'VE HELPED ME! I FEEL LIKE A NEW MAN! MY MIND IS WASHED CLEAN!
AND NOW, TO MAKE SURE THAT YOUR LAST HABIT IS BROKEN, GIVE ME THE BOX OF SPIDERS! I'LL GET RID OF THEM FOR YOU!
YES...IT REPULSES ME EVEN TO THINK OF IT NOW! GOODBYE, DOCTOR!
I JUST SAW MR KEENE LEAVE, DOCTOR! HE LOOKS LIKE A NEW MAN! IF HE'S BEEN TO SO MANY OTHER PSYCHIATRISTS, HOW COME YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN ABLE TO HELP HIM?
ER-ER-- I'VE MADE A SPECIAL STUDY OF CASES LIKE HIS! AND NOW, EXCUSE ME! I DON'T WANT TO BE DISTURBED! I'M TIRED!
AHHH, SPIDERS! HE REALLY PICKED CHOICE ONES!
GULP!
SMACK! SMACK! MMM!
HAVE YOU EVER TRIED EATING SPIDERS? SOUNDS NAUSEATING, DOESN'T IT? BUT ACTUALLY--TO MY TASTE -- THEY'RE NOT REALLY SO BAD!
Menu

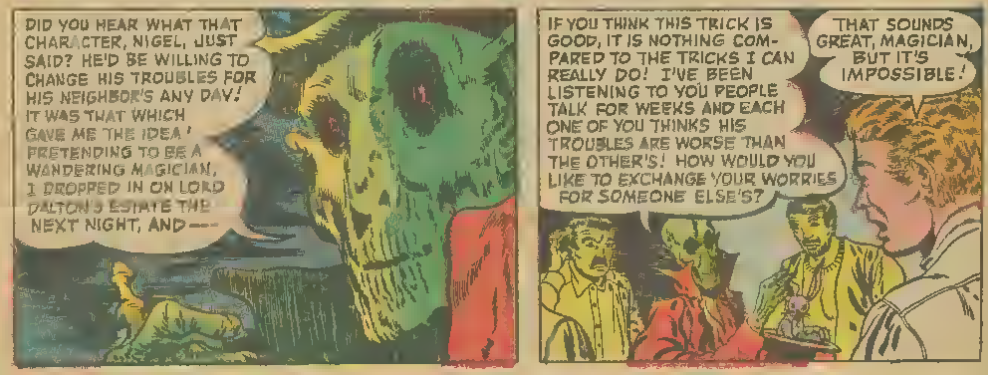
THE BAGS OF TROUBLE

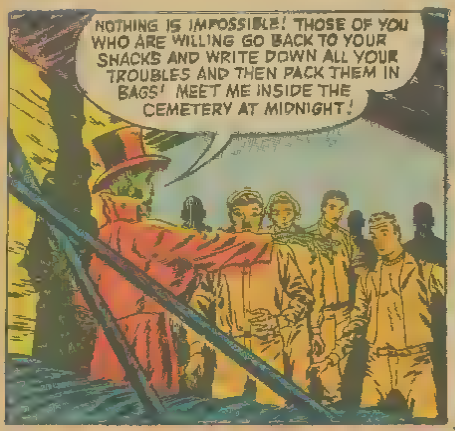


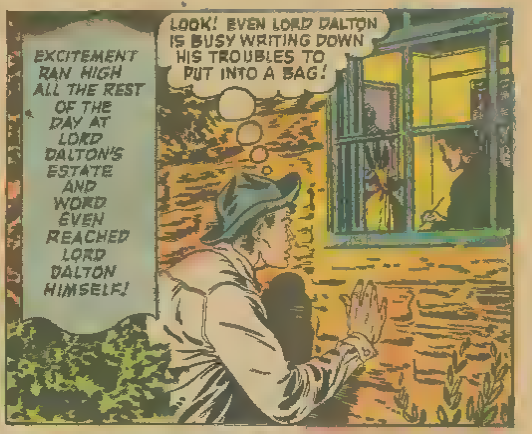
MORNING NOON and NIGHT

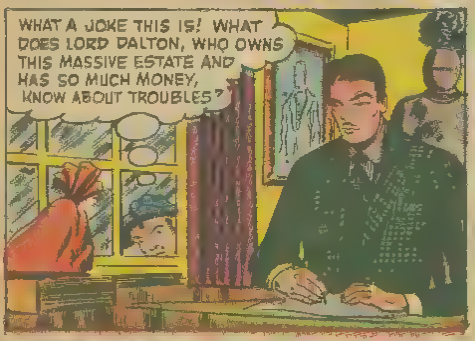
ALL ONE HEARD ON THE DALTON ESTATE WAS GRIPING!

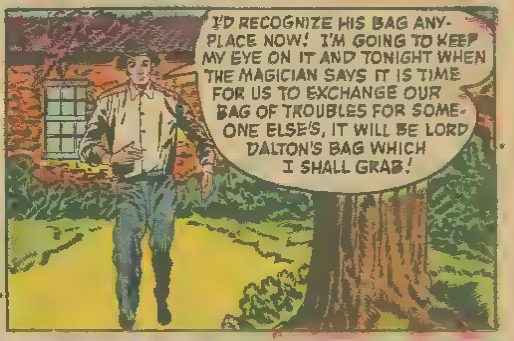




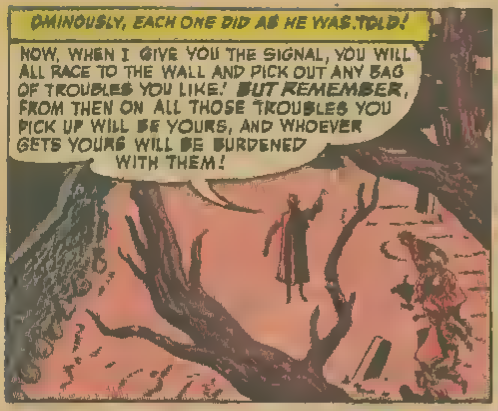

NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE! THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE WILLING GO BACK TO YOUR SHACKS AND WRITE DOWN ALL YOUR TROUBLES AND THEN PACK THEM IN BAGS! MEET ME INSIDE THE CEMETERY AT MIDNIGHT!


EXCITEMENT RAN HIGH ALL THE REST OF THE DAY AT LORD DALTON'S ESTATE AND WORD EVEN REACHED LORD DALTON HIMSELF!
LOOK! EVEN LORD DALTON IS BUSY WRITING DOWN HIS TROUBLES TO PUT INTO A BAG!


WHAT A JOKE THIS IS! WHAT DOES LORD DALTON, WHO OWNS THIS MASSIVE ESTATE AND HAS SO MUCH MONEY, KNOW ABOUT TROUBLES?


I'D RECOGNIZE HIS BAG ANYPLACE NOW! I'M GOING TO KEEP MY EYE ON IT AND TONIGHT WHEN THE MAGICIAN SAYS IT IS TIME FOR US TO EXCHANGE OUR BAG OF TROUBLES FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S, IT WILL BE LORD DALTON'S BAG WHICH I SHALL GRAB!

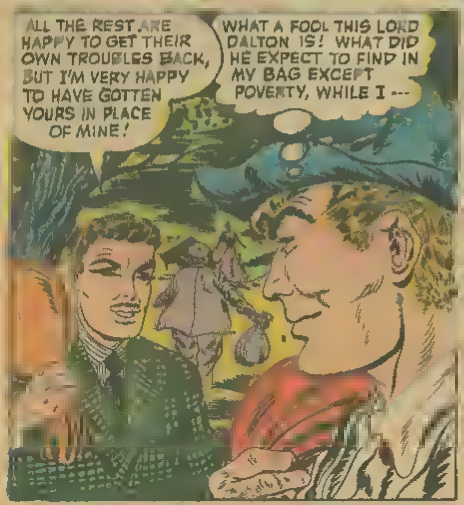
LIKE A PARADE OF GHOULS, AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT LORD DALTON AND HIS HELP MARCH INTO THE CEMETERY CARRYING THEIR BAGS OF TROUBLES WITH THEM!
PLACE ALL YOUR BAGS WITH THE TROUBLES IN THEM AGAINST THE CEMETERY WALL AND THEN COME AND FORM A STRAIGHT LINE NEXT TO ME OVER HERE!


OMINOUSLY, EACH ONE DID AS HE WAS TOLD!
NOW, WHEN I GIVE YOU THE SIGNAL, YOU WILL ALL RACE TO THE WALL AND PICK OUT ANY BAG OF TROUBLES YOU LIKE! BUT REMEMBER, FROM THEN ON ALL THOSE TROUBLES YOU PICK UP WILL BE YOURS, AND WHOEVER GETS YOURS WILL BE BURDENED WITH THEM!

BUT THEN A CRY LIKE A BANSHEE'S SHRIEK BROKE THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT!
NO! NO! I COMPLAIN ALL THE TIME, BUT WHO KNOWS IF MY TROUBLES ARE REALLY ANY WORSE THAN MY NEIGHBOR'S! THEY MAY BE A LOT LESS! I WANT MY OWN BAG BACK!

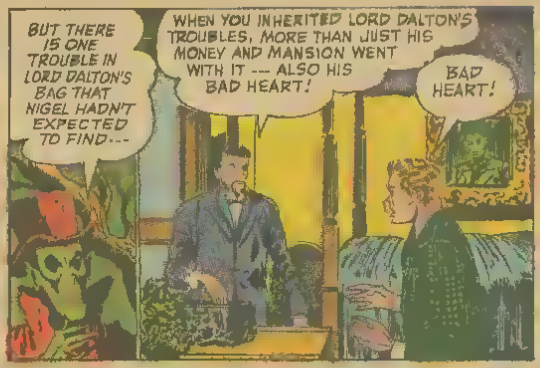
ME, TOO!
ME, TOO!
I WANT MY BAG BACK, TOO!

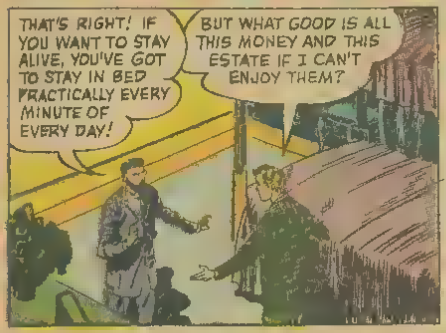
ONLY NIGEL DIDN'T SHOUT OUT!
I'VE GOT MY HAND ON LORD DALTON'S BAG OF TROUBLES AND I'M GOING TO KEEP THEM!
YOU ARE WELCOME TO THEM! AS SOON AS THE OTHER WORKERS TAKE BACK THEIR OWN TROUBLES, I WILL GLADLY TAKE YOURS IN EXCHANGE!

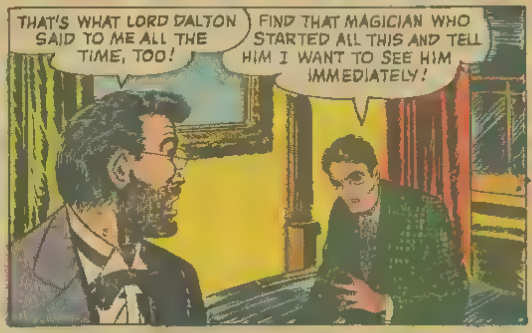

ALL THE REST ARE HAPPY TO GET THEIR OWN TROUBLES BACK, BUT I'M VERY HAPPY TO HAVE GOTTEN YOURS IN PLACE OF MINE!
WHAT A FOOL THIS LORD DALTON IS! WHAT DID HE EXPECT TO FIND IN MY BAG EXCEPT POVERTY, WHILE I ---

---NOW AM LORD AND MASTER OF THIS ENTIRE ESTATE!

AND ALL THESE PEOPLE WILL BE WORKING FOR ME! MY TROUBLES ARE OVER!


BUT THERE IS ONE TROUBLE IN LORD DALTON'S BAG THAT NIGEL HADN'T EXPECTED TO FIND---
WHEN YOU INHERITED LORD DALTON'S TROUBLES, MORE THAN JUST HIS MONEY AND MANSION WENT WITH IT --- ALSO HIS BAD HEART!
BAD HEART!


THAT'S RIGHT! IF YOU WANT TO STAY ALIVE, YOU'VE GOT TO STAY IN BED PRACTICALLY EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY!
BUT WHAT GOOD IS ALL THIS MONEY AND THIS ESTATE IF I CAN'T ENJOY THEM?


THAT'S WHAT LORD DALTON SAID TO ME ALL THE TIME, TOO!
FIND THAT MAGICIAN WHO STARTED ALL THIS AND TELL HIM I WANT TO SEE HIM IMMEDIATELY!

OF COURSE I WAS ENJOYING THIS ALL TOO MUCH TO HAVE BEEN TOO FAR AWAY, SO...
POOF!

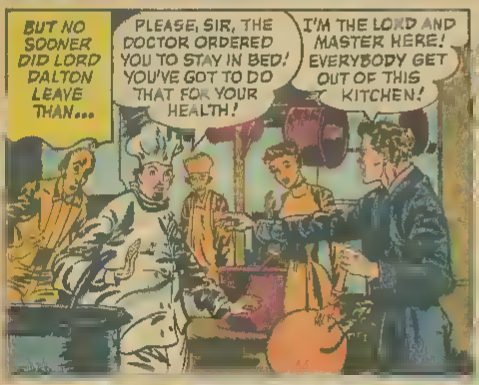
YOU SENT FOR ME?
I DID! YOU'VE GOT TO GET LORD DALTON TO GIVE ME BACK MY OLD TROUBLES!

BUT THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE! THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN GET YOUR TROUBLES BACK IS FOR LORD DALTON TO OFFER THEM VOLUNTARILY TO YOU OR TO WAIT UNTIL HE DIES! THEN YOUR OWN TROUBLES WILL RETURN TO YOU!
I CAN'T WAIT THAT LONG! I'VE GOT A BAD HEART NOW! MY LIFE MAY END AT ANY SECOND! TELL LORD DALTON I WANT TO SEE HIM IMMEDIATELY! HE'S WORKING IN MY STABLES NOW!

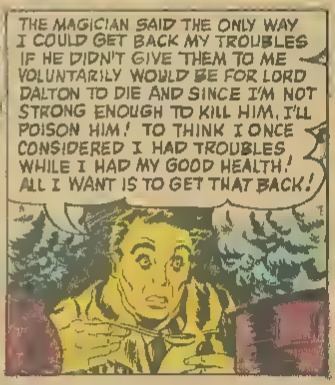
SHORTLY AFTER...
YOU SENT FOR ME, SIR?
YES, LORD DALTON! I WANT TO GIVE YOU BACK YOUR TROUBLES FOR MY OWN!

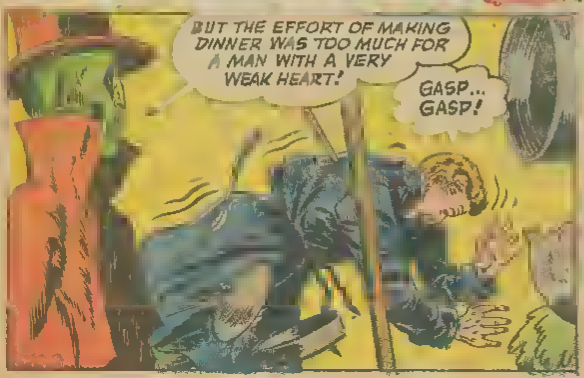
NEVER! I MAY BE POOR WITH YOUR TROUBLES, NIGEL, BUT AT LEAST I'M AS HEALTHY AS AN OX! THERE'S NOTHING IN THIS WORLD THAT COULD MAKE ME GIVE YOU BACK YOUR TROUBLES FOR MINE!

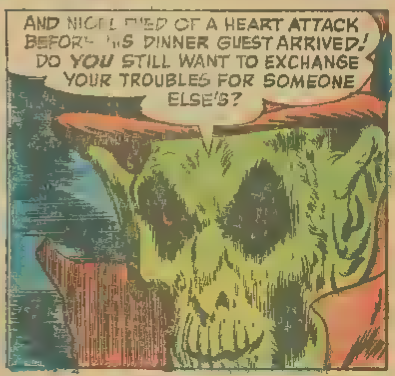
NIGEL CRIED, PLEADED AND EVEN BEGGED, BUT LORD DALTON WAS ADAMANT!
WELL, IF YOU WON'T EXCHANGE TROUBLES, AT LEAST YOU CAN BE MY FRIEND! YOU'LL COME FOR DINNER TONIGHT!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, SIR!


BUT NO SOONER DID LORD DALTON LEAVE THAN...
PLEASE, SIR, THE DOCTOR ORDERED YOU TO STAY IN BED! YOU'VE GOT TO DO THAT FOR YOUR HEALTH!
I'M THE LORD AND MASTER HERE! EVERYBODY GET OUT OF THIS KITCHEN!

AND THEN WORKING LIKE A MAN POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL NIGEL PREPARED A VERY SPECIAL DINNER FOR HIS GUEST THAT NIGHT!

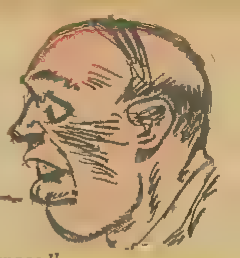

THE MAGICIAN SAID THE ONLY WAY I COULD GET BACK MY TROUBLES IF HE DIDN'T GIVE THEM TO ME VOLUNTARILY WOULD BE FOR LORD DALTON TO DIE AND SINCE I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO KILL HIM, I'LL POISON HIM! TO THINK I ONCE CONSIDERED I HAD TROUBLES WHILE I HAD MY GOOD HEALTH! ALL I WANT IS TO GET THAT BACK!


BUT THE EFFORT OF MAKING DINNER WAS TOO MUCH FOR A MAN WITH A VERY WEAK HEART!
GASP... GASP!


AND NIGEL DIED OF A HEART ATTACK BEFORE HIS DINNER GUEST ARRIVED! DO YOU STILL WANT TO EXCHANGE YOUR TROUBLES FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S?

THIS MAGAZINE IS HAUNTED

VENDETTA



By John Martin

AT THE ENTRANCE to the precinct, Lugi's courage failed him. Then a sudden wave of intense fear of what lay behind him sent strength into his faltering steps.

He entered the lobby of the building, saw the hated blue uniforms of the police. A chill went through him. Lugi took a deep breath. It had been a walk of only six blocks to the precinct—five minutes. But he would remember those five minutes all his life. He had kept to the sidewalk's edge all the way, as far from the slum buildings as possible, his eyes warily searching every black-mouthed alley, every half-open window. At any moment, he'd known, a gun might bark. He would crumple, a shabby, bloody corpse, dead even before he hit the pavement.

But he wasn't dead—*yet*, he thought.

"Santa Maria!" he muttered and walked up to the sergeant's desk on wobbly legs.

Police Sergeant Murray greeted him. "Scared, Lugi?" he asked.

"You, too, would be frightened," Lugi said hurriedly, "if you knew your life was in danger." He shuddered. *"Baldo has given out the word to kill me!"*

"Baldo's a punk gangster, a cheap, two-bit greenhorn," Murray grated. "We'd slap bracelets on him if we had any real evidence, but . . ."

Lugi grimaced impatiently. "Baldo is the boss of this neighborhood," he said. "He hates me. Between his family and mine, for hundreds of years, since long ago in the old country, there has been the blood feud, the vendetta." Lugi sighed. "I am the last of my family, and the oldest of those who remain. So long as my brother was alive, I was safe. Last year, as you know, he was killed."

"Baldo's work?" Murray inquired.

Lugi smiled thinly. "I know there is no proof," he said. "He is sworn to wipe out . . ."

"I know, I know," Murray snorted. "These confounded private wars keep this neighborhood a foot deep in corpses."

"You must protect me," Lugi said stubbornly.

"This is a democracy, Lugi," Murray said. "You've got to have evidence to arrest a man—not just hearsay." He looked up and frowned. "But I guess we will have to protect you, so the only thing I can do for the time being is to have a plainclothesman tail you, watch you from a distance. Perhaps our man can keep Baldo from getting to you. And then again, perhaps not. But that's the best we can do." He shrugged and returned to his paper work.

Lugi stood there, silent. Then he turned slowly and went out, conscious of the eyes on him, the eyes of police officers and detectives. Often he had fooled them in some clever robbery, frustrated the law's long arm by legal loopholes and tricks. Not one of them, he guessed, would have wanted to be in his shoes for two minutes—not even for a million dollars.

Outside, in the street, he stood, irresoluta, before the precinct. From windows, from the dark, narrow slits of doorways, he knew frightened eyes were watching, perhaps eyes heavy with menace. And he knew that a detective was watching him, too, but somehow the thought was not too comforting.

He took the six blocks back to his cheap roominghouse at a stiff-legged walk, his nerves tense, screaming silently inside his head. A little girl darted into his path by accident from a doorway, saw him and fled, shrieking. Lugi paled. Even the children knew who and what he was. Even the children knew it might be death to befriend Lugi—who was marked for death.

He reached his own doorway unharmed and swallowed hard in relief. Upstairs, in his furnished room, he took out his gun and hefted it. It was some protection, but not much. Baldo, he remembered, struck quietly and from the dark. There was much that had been strange and unnatural about his brother's

(Continued on inside back cover)

Vendetta

(Continued from inside front cover)

death. He shook his head. The gun would not ha enough.

Lugi shivered, sitting in his room, the last gray light of day filtering through the dirty window panes. He began to realize that in going to the police ha might have made a prime miatake. Baldo had a strange way of knowing what went on in the neighborhood. Lugi's teeth chattered. He mumbled sorry words.

There was only one thing to do now, he knew, and the thought sent prickles of queasiness through his body. It would take money, too, all be had, perhaps. And he would have to do it alone, without hia police protection.

Lugi stood up with decision. What good could money do a corpse? Better to sacrifice the ill-gotten gaina of years and live.

"Corpa," he muttered, "Corpa's magic can help me!"

From a suitcase in a closet he dug a steel hox, opened it and took out a wad of currency. Then, stuffing it in his breast pocket safely, he pocketed the gun and went downatairs, then out the back way, unsaen, emerging into the twilight of the day's end. He knew the detective was still in front of his house, watching his window. But he had no use for him now.

The trail to Corpa's was along darker streets and alleys than the ones he already knew. But is was well marked. The further he went the more weather-beaten and grimier grew the buildings, the more shifty the visages of the prowling figures that slunk in and out of doorways.

From some dim, dusty bar came the cackling sounds of laughter and the bang of a tinny piano Suddenly, he felt ill; his stomach ached sharply. Weakness overcame him He paused and leaned against a boarded-up shop. The spell passed and he went on, ever deeper into the slums

At Corpa's, as he approached the ancient, tumble-down house, a small huddle of raggsd figures fled as he approached. Looking back he saw the street deserted. Even here, he realized, Baldo's threat had penetrated To be seen with Lugi, or near him, was to invite murder

A dim light burned in the hallway of the old tenement as he went in. It wss a two-atory structure, with a fruit atore on the ground floor and Corpa's shrouded quarters on the second. Up the stairs he went, breathing hard, his heart thudding.

At Corpa's door ha knocked, held on to the jamb for support and felt for the money, smiling weakly when he found it was still there. With money, with Corpa there was hope.

The door opened creakily.

"Come in," Corpa said Then, when she saw who it was, she tried to shut the door. "Get out, Lugi, you bring ill luck!" she cackled

He forced his way inside. The door slammed behind them.

"I must see you, Corpa," ha wheezed. Hurriedly he thrust all his money into her hands and pushed the crone through the curtained doorway into her sanctum.

Lugi froze. In the light of candles burning under Corpa's altar, Baldo stood. He smiled evilly.

"You are too late, Lugi!" Baldo croaked. "You are a dead man!"

Corpa shrieked as Lugi's gun came up and Baldo, paling, drew bis own. Both guns thundered. Lugi fainted. When he came to, minutes later, he saw the two dead bodies, realizing, exultantly that his shot had killed Baldo while Baldo's, missing him, had killed Corpa. Lugi could çlaim self-defense, he knew. And there would be no need to pay Corpa to mold a tiny wax image of Baldo, then melt it before a candle, thus killing Baldo in the ancient way of death.

BUT BALDO, he remembered, as a spasm of pain passed through him, had said he was too late! His eyes swung to the hidaous altar, then widenod in terror at what they saw. Baldo had been there before him! Baldo had paid Corpa to mold a tiny wax figure of Lugi! It stood there, its face a miniature of Lugi's, melting alowly into the candle beneath it, causing the pains, the weakness, the paralysis he felt. In minutes ha knew, the flame would reach the statue's heart, killing him!

Too late, he echoad. The legs and arms of the imaga had melted. He couldn't move his own, now. Then the candle flared. Lugi groaned and fell back dead as the tiny image fell full into its lethal flame!

THE END

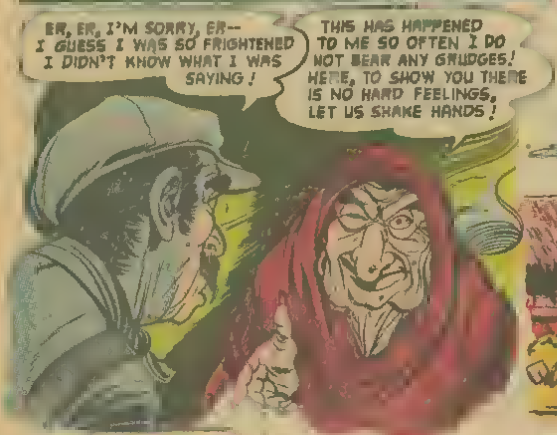
YOU MIGHT SAY A GOLFER WHO CONTINUALLY SINKS A 25-FOOT PUTT HAS THE RIGHT "TOUCH"!
A BILLIARD PLAYER WHO RUNS OFF FIFTEEN CONSECUTIVE BALLS HAS THE RIGHT "TOUCH"! AND ANYONE WHO CAN PERPETUALLY TURN A LIVING PERSON INTO A DEAD CORPSE HAS THE RIGHT "TOUCH"---THE TOUCH OF DEATH! JUST A SECOND WHILE I CHANGE THE POPULATION FIGURE! THERE! NOW LET'S JOIN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION
TOUCH OF DEATH
THANK GOODNESS WE FOUND THE CAUSE OF ALL THOSE MYSTERIOUS DEATHS BEFORE THE WHOLE TOWN OF HUXLEY WAS WIPED OFF THE MAP!
HA, HA, HA! MAYBE I SHOULDN'T LAUGH, BUT WHEN I THINK THAT THE CAUSE OF ALL OUR TROUBLES IS SAFELY LOCKED INSIDE THIS COFFIN AND WILL SOON BE BURIED AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS, I CAN'T HELP BUT LAUGH!

OF COURSE YOU WANT TO LAUGH! GETTING RID OF THIS MONSTER ONCE AND FOR ALL IS SOMETHING FOR ALL OF US TO LAUGH ABOUT! HA, HA!
GETTING RID OF YOUR TROUBLES IS SOMETHING TO CHEER ABOUT, FRIENDS, BUT THE QUESTION IS, WHO IS GOING TO HAVE THE LAST LAUGH?
LET'S WATCH THIS FRESHLY COVERED OVER GRAVE UNTIL NIGHT FALLS! DON'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF IT NOW!
ALL RIGHT! IT'S TIME! DID YOU NOTICE SOMETHING?
NO? WELL, COME A LITTLE CLOSER! HERE, LET ME LEAD YOU! THAT'S RIGHT-- TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE GRAVE SO YOU CAN SEE!
LOOK CLOSELY AND YOU'LL SEE THAT THE DIRT ON TOP OF THE GRAVE IS BEGINNING TO ERUPT!

AND MUDGA, THE UGLY OLD CRONE WHOM THE SURVIVORS IN THE TOWN OF HUXLEY HAD JUST BURIED, GETS UP!
HUXLEY WAS SUCH A NICE TOWN THAT I HATE TO MOVE ON, BUT I KNOW WHEN I'M NOT WANTED!
I GUESS IF IT'S PEACE AND QUIET I WANT I'LL HAVE TO LOOK FOR A NEW TOWN TO SETTLE IN!
WEARILY, THE OLD HAG WHOSE FEATURES COMBINES THE ... AND A BANSHEE MADE HER WAY THROUGH THE NEARBY WOODS!
I'M COMING TO A TOWN! IT'S FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM HUXLEY SO MY PAST WON'T CATCH UP WITH ME FOR A LONG TIME!
IF I CAN FIND A PLACE TO LIVE OUT HERE IN THE HILLS, I WON'T EVEN HAVE TO GO INTO TOWN AND NO ONE NEED KNOW THAT I'M EVEN HERE!
NSHIRE POP. 321
IT WON'T BE LONG THAT I'LL HAVE TO BE DOING THIS SO I MIGHT AS WELL GET A HEAD START!

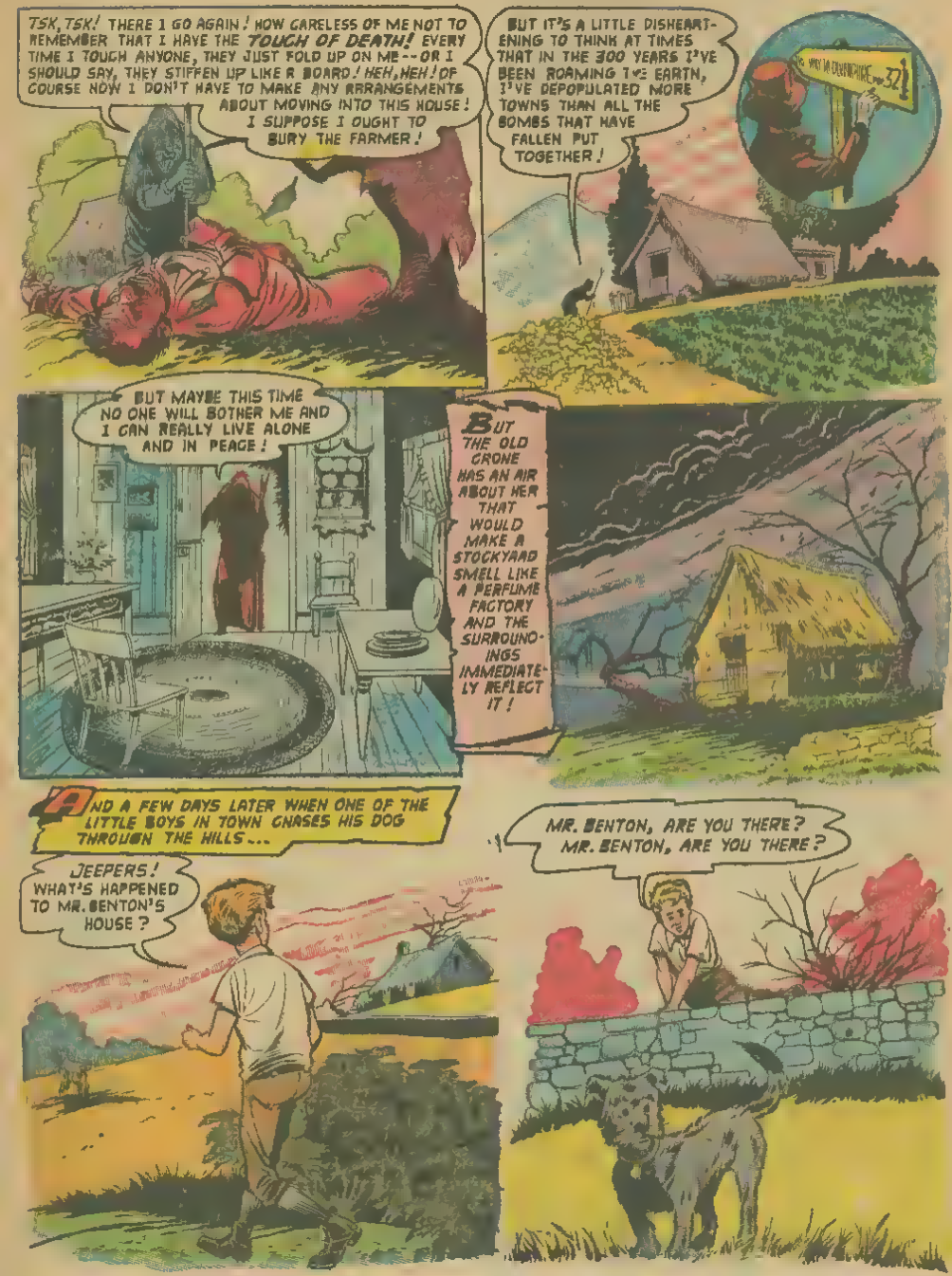
NOW THERE'S A PRETTY FARMHOUSE! JUST THE TYPE I WOULD LOVE TO SETTLE DOWN IN! HEH, HEH!

MY EYES MUST BE GOING BAD ON ME! THERE COULDN'T BE ANYTHING AS UGLY AS THAT!
I KNOW I WOULDN'T WIN ANY BEAUTY CONTEST, BUT I DON'T LIKE TO BE INSULTED!


ER, ER, I'M SORRY, ER— I GUESS I WAS SO FRIGHTENED I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS SAYING!
THIS HAS HAPPENED TO ME SO OFTEN I DO NOT BEAR ANY GRUDGES! HERE, TO SHOW YOU THERE IS NO HARD FEELINGS, LET US SHAKE HANDS!

THAT'S MIGHTY NICE OF YOU! I CERTAINLY WILL SHAKE HANDS WITH YOU!

YIPES!


TSK, TSK! THERE I GO AGAIN! HOW CARELESS OF ME NOT TO REMEMBER THAT I HAVE THE TOUCH OF DEATH! EVERY TIME I TOUCH ANYONE, THEY JUST FOLD UP ON ME--OR I SHOULD SAY, THEY STIFFEN UP LIKE A BOARD! HEH, HEH! OF COURSE NOW I DON'T HAVE TO MAKE ANY ARRANGEMENTS ABOUT MOVING INTO THIS HOUSE! I SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO BURY THE FARMER!
BUT IT'S A LITTLE DISHEARTENING TO THINK AT TIMES THAT IN THE 300 YEARS I'VE BEEN ROAMING THE EARTH, I'VE DEPOPULATED MORE TOWNS THAN ALL THE BOMBS THAT HAVE FALLEN PUT TOGETHER!
BUT MAYBE THIS TIME NO ONE WILL BOTHER ME AND I CAN REALLY LIVE ALONE AND IN PEACE!
BUT THE OLD CRONE HAS AN AIR ABOUT HER THAT WOULD MAKE A STOCKYARD SMELL LIKE A PERFUME FACTORY AND THE SURROUNDINGS IMMEDIATELY REFLECT IT!
AND A FEW DAYS LATER WHEN ONE OF THE LITTLE BOYS IN TOWN CHASES HIS DOG THROUGH THE HILLS...
JEEPERS! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO MR. BENTON'S HOUSE?
MR. BENTON, ARE YOU THERE? MR. BENTON, ARE YOU THERE?

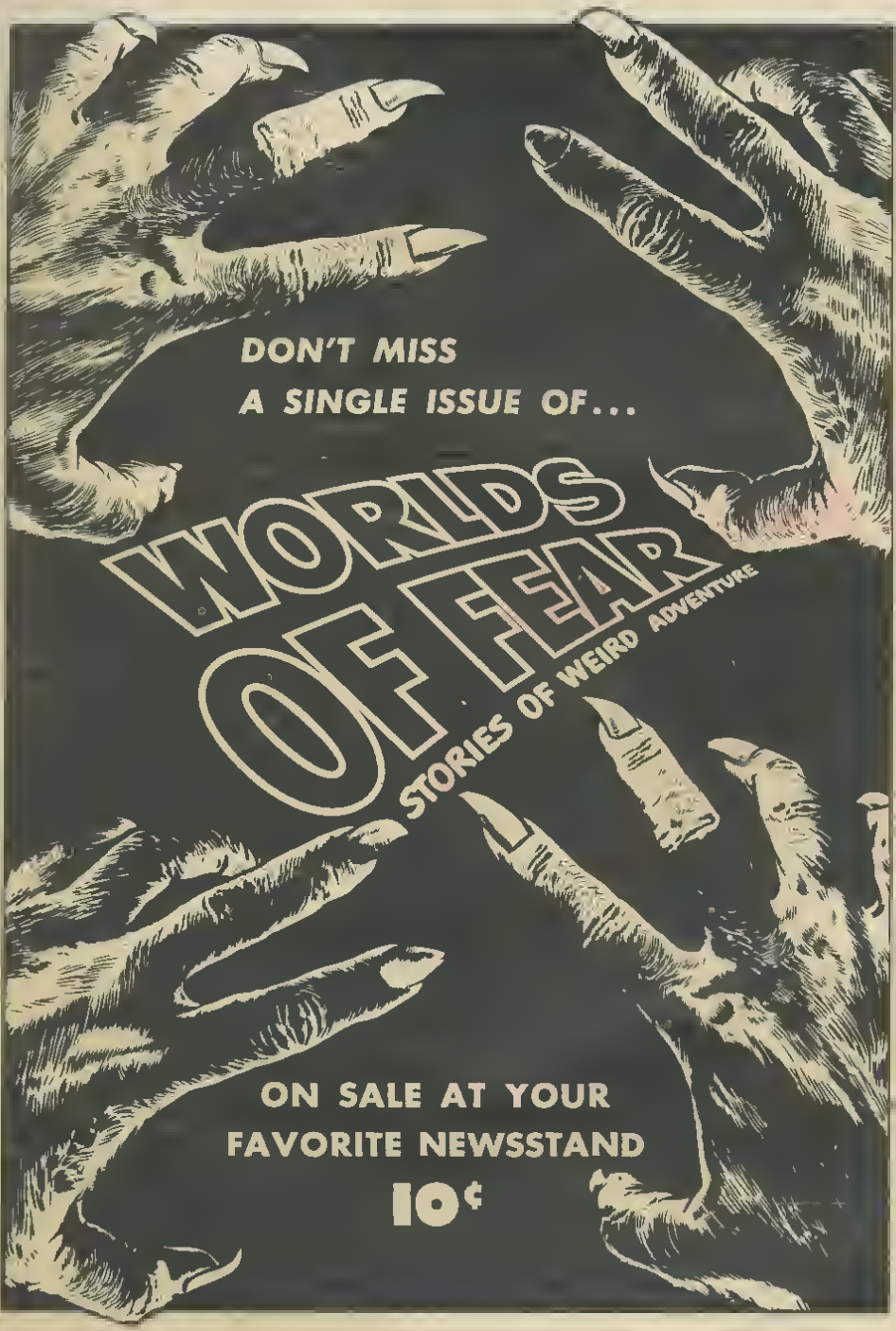
GO WAY, BOY! FARMER BENTON DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANY MORE!
LET'S GO, FIDO! LET'S GO!
GRRREE YIP YAP!
SCAT, YOU MUTT!
GRRRRNNN! GRRYEE YIPYIYI!
FIDO DROPPED DEAD! SHE MUST BE A WITCH!
RUNNING AS FAST AS HIS LEGS CAN CARRY HIM, TOMMY WENTWORTH SOON REACHED THE TOWN HALL OF DEVONSHIRE!
YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T COME IN HERE, TOMMY! NO ONE'S ALLOWED IN UNTIL WE GET ALL THE PREPARATIONS READY FOR OUR ANNUAL PARTY THIS AFTERNOON! NOW GO OUT AND PLAY!
BUT, MR. BRUXTON, I JUST SAW A WITCH!
HA, HA! YOU AND YOUR IMAGINATION!
IT'S NOT MY IMAGINATION! YOU'RE OUR CONSTABLE AND YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT HER! SHE'S LIVING IN MR. BENTON'S HOUSE! MY DOG JUST BIT HER AND HE DROPPED DEAD AT HER FEET!

THAT'S ODD--MR. BENTON SELLING OUT AND MOVING AWAY WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING TO ANYONE!
NOTHING WAS ODD FOR MR. BENTON! HE NEVER WAS WHAT I WOULD CALL A GOOD NEIGHBOR! BUT I THINK WE SHOULD INVITE THAT OLD LADY WHO'S LIVING IN HIS HOUSE TO OUR PARTY!
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, CONSTABLE! MATT AND I WILL GO UP TO HER PLACE TO INVITE HER WHILE THE REST OF YOU FINISH UP WITH THE TRIMMINGS!
DON'T GO! I WARN YOU! SHE'S A WITCH!
NOW STOP THAT NONSENSE, TOMMY, OR I'LL HAVE TO TELL YOUR FATHER ABOUT THIS!
WOW! SHE SURE DOES LOOK LIKE A WITCH!
QUIET, MATT! DO YOU WANT HER TO HEAR YOU? AFTER ALL, IT'S NOT HER FAULT THAT SHE'S UGLY! OUR TOWN HAS A REPUTATION FOR HOSPITALITY AND WE MUSTN'T DO ANYTHING TO SPOIL IT!
WELCOME TO TOWN, MADAM! MATT AND I HAVE COME TO INVITE YOU TO OUR ANNUAL PARTY THIS AFTERNOON!
OH, OH! HERE IT STARTS! WHY CAN'T THEY JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!
I'M SORRY, BUT I'M JUST TOO TIRED TO ATTEND ANY PARTIES!
BUT THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU NEED! THE PARTY WILL PEP YOU UP!
NO! NO! DON'T TOUCH ME!

SOMEONE ELSE IN TOWN MUST HAVE KNOWN THEY WERE COMING HERE TO INVITE ME TO THE PARTY, SO I CAN'T JUST BURY THEM! I'LL HAVE TO DROP THEM IN THE ROAD AS FAR AWAY FROM THIS FARMHOUSE AS I CAN MANAGE!
NATURALLY THE JOY OF THE PARTY THAT AFTERNOON WAS DAMPENED BY THE TWO COFFINS IN ONE CORNER OF THE TOWN HALL!
THIS
DEVONSHIRE
POP. 349
DON'T ANYONE LOOK AT THE BODIES! IT'S A SIGHT TO SCARE THE WITS OUT OF ANY SANE MAN!
THE DOCTOR HAS CHECKED EVERY ONE OF THE MEDICAL BOOKS IN HIS LIBRARY, BUT HE'S STILL UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHAT CAUSED THEIR DEATHS! HE'S NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE!
WHY WON'T SOMEBODY LISTEN TO ME! I TELL YOU IT'S THE OLD WITCH WHO'S LIVING IN MR. BENTON'S HOUSE!
ENOUGH OF THAT, TOMMY! ONE MORE REMARK OUT OF YOU AND YOU'LL GET THE SPANKING YOU DESERVE! YOU'VE BEEN TELLING THE KIDS IN TOWN THAT SILLY STORY ALL AFTER NOON AND I'M AFRAID THE STORY WILL GET BACK TO THAT POOR OLD LADY!
PERHAPS IT'S ALREADY REACHED HER EARS! I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO PROVE THAT WE ADULTS TAKE NO STOCK IN IT BY INVITING HER, AS SOON AS THE FUNERAL IS OVER, TO ONE OF OUR SEWING CIRCLE MEETINGS!
THAT'S A GOOD IDEA! WE'LL DO THAT!
IT IS NICE OF YOU LADIES TO INVITE ME TO JOIN YOUR SEWING CIRCLE BUT I PREFER TO STAY HERE BY MYSELF!
WHAT BEAUTIFUL LACE YOU HAVE ON YOUR CUFFS! DO YOU MIND IF I HAVE A CLOSER LOOK
DON'T!
YO!

TOMMY WAS RIGHT! SHE IS A WITCH!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE SHE KILLS US, TOO!
AAGHHH!
I MUSN'T LET THE OTHER ONE GET AWAY!
HELP! HELP!
HELP! HELP! SHOOT HER, CONSTABLE! SHOOT HER! SHE IS A WITCH! SHE IS A WITCH!
BANG! BANG! BANG!
IF A CROWD HADN'T GATHERED, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO PRETEND TO HAVE BEEN SHOT TO DEATH, BUT I'M TOO TIRED TO CHASE ALL THESE PEOPLE! I GUESS I'M JUST GETTING OLD!

SHE LOOKS DEAD ALL RIGHT!
WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T TOUCH HER! SHE HAD THE TOUCH OF DEATH ON HER AND MAYBE SHE STILL HAS IT EVEN THOUGH SHE'S DEAD!
WE'LL SLIP A BOARD UNDER HER AND BUILD A COFFIN RIGHT ON TOP OF HER!
HA, HA, HA!
THIS IS ONE FUNERAL I SURE AM GLAD TO ATTEND -- BECAUSE IF I WASN'T ATTENDING IT, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEAD MYSELF!
NOW LET'S COVER IT UP WITH DIRT AND GO HOME AND TRY TO FORGET THIS HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE!
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN DAYS I FEEL LIKE REALLY LAUGHING! HA, HA!
BUT, FRIENDS, WHO IS REALLY GOING TO GET THE LAST LAUGH?
LOOK CLOSELY NOW! THAT'S RIGHT, THE GRAVE IS OPENING UP AGAIN!
SO REMEMBER IF SOME LITTLE BOY TELLS YOU THAT HE'S JUST SEEN A WITCH, YOU'D BETTER THINK TWICE AND ACT EVEN FASTER BEFORE YOU SAY IT'S JUST HIS IMAGINATION! SEE YOU SOON! HA, HA!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